

# WOMEN'S HEALTH *Talk*



## NATIONAL MENTOR MONTH

"My mentor Peter is very nice. I think he is nice because he got me a dictionary for Christmas holiday. He is also checking my homework everyday that I see him."

Winston K, Costa Mesa, CA

Has someone made a difference in your life?

**Thank Your Mentor Day™** will be celebrated on Thursday, January 24. On that day, many Americans will reach out to thank or honor those individuals who encouraged and guided them, and had a lasting impact on their lives.

Four ways to honor your mentor:

- Contact him/her directly to express your appreciation
- Become a mentor to a young person in your community
- Make a financial contribution to a local mentoring program
- Write a tribute to your mentor on <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/wmy2008/index.html>

## CONCERNS OF THE HEART

**C**ardiovascular disease – high blood pressure, heart attack or stroke – affects nearly 80 million Americans, and heart disease is the number one killer of women. The American Heart Association has designated the first Friday in February each year as National Wear Red Day as part of the national Go Red for Women movement. It is designed to encourage women to improve their heart health while taking action to fight heart disease.

Martha Potina, 56, is a Registered Nurse employed in the operating room of a large hospital system in Houston, Texas. On May 24 this year she awoke early and while making her way back to bed from the restroom, her head started to spin – “the room began to look like a kaleidoscope,” she said, “and I stumbled and fell on the bed. I told my husband, Ralph, to call 911.” Ralph already knew what to do because he could not understand a word she said. Martha had suffered a stroke.

Luckily, the Potinas live just minutes from a hospital that was well equipped to deal with cardiovascular problems, like stroke. “Being in close proximity to medical personnel who are



*The Classique bra provides a comfortable fit for women with devices such as pacemakers and chemo ports implanted in the chest.*

knowledgeable about treating strokes helped save my life,” said Martha. “I was within the three-hour window to receive tPA, a clot-busting drug. It made all the difference in my survival and recovery.”

Martha had all the risk factors for stroke: high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, a stressful job, no regular exercise, being overweight and a family history (her father had also suffered a stroke).

As an RN, she was committed to taking care of others, but did not take time to care for herself. Ironically, she had the stroke just days before her church was to hold a “Stroke Scan” sign-up drive – one she had organized herself as the head of the parish nurse’s group. “I hadn’t considered the risk factors for me – only for other people,” she said.

After Ralph and their daughters, Teresa and Patricia, spent an anxious 48 hours waiting while Martha was in the ICU, they were relieved that she had survived, but dismayed that she would spend the next month recuperating in

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## BRA-VO!

### Enhancing your shape in '08

While wearing a bra will not prevent the breasts from sagging (you can thank gravity, softening ligaments and loss of breast tissue over time for that), it can enhance the silhouette, protect “the girls” from trauma and keep soreness at bay. As the famous bra commercial boasted on 1970s prime time TV, properly fitting bras can “lift and separate” and subtract pounds without the wearer ever having to lose an ounce.

While there is no magic in finding the right size bra, there is something keeping 85 percent of the women in the United States from wearing the right size. So as 2008 rolls in, it may be time to consider contacting an expert. Women’s Health Boutique has certified fitters that can create a slimmer-looking you in no time! Find the location nearest you at [www.w-h-b.com](http://www.w-h-b.com).

## BRA TALK

### How many bras do you own?

Fewer than 5 - 27.1%

5-10 - 44.9%

11-15 - 16.8%

More than 15 - 11.2%

### Have you ever been professionally sized for a bra?

No - 54.2%

Yes - 45.8%

### How much will you spend on a bra?

Less than \$30 - 36.0%

Less than \$60 - 37.8%

Doesn't matter as long as it fits well - 26.2%

### What do you have the hardest time shopping for?

Bras - 20.3%

Jeans - 22.0%

Swimwear - 17.2%

All of the above - 36.7%

None of the above - 3.7%

Survey submitted by Susan Brooks, owner of WHB in Torrence, CA; obtained from [www.stylebakery.com](http://www.stylebakery.com).

*Reaching out to women everywhere*

## RELIEF FOR TIRED LEGS AND FEET

“Unless a person is a professional runner, just about everyone can benefit from compression hosiery,” said Danine Harden, owner of Women’s Health Boutique on FM 1960 in Houston, Texas. “People who fly frequently, waitresses, hairdressers – anyone who is on her feet constantly or seated for long periods of time – will feel better with the use of compression on her legs.”

Men or women with only occasional swelling in the feet, a few broken blood vessels in the legs or who are racking up frequent flyer miles on the job may not have considered seeking relief through the use of compression therapy garments. Support stockings or knee-highs could be just the answer to freedom from annoying aches and pains or swelling in the legs, ankles or feet.



For people who have suffered traumas such as a laceration or broken bones, or have had surgery on knees, hips or ankles, can experience relief from swelling caused by lymphedema with help from products such as SportsWrap® from JoViPak, Juzo Silver Strong® and Anti-Em® from Jobst. These garments apply gradient compression that enhances blood circulation and assists in the flow of lymph fluids.

A variety of support and compression hose and wraps can be found at Women’s Health Boutique, along with knowledgeable personnel to assist in finding the best fit for each unique need.

*To learn if you are a candidate for compression garments, turn to page 4.*

# CANCER PATIENTS LOOK GOOD... FEEL BETTER

By Joann McDonald, WHB Manager,  
Birmingham, Alabama

Last summer, three women from three very different backgrounds walked into a meeting as strangers at Women's Health Boutique in the Trinity Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama. They may not have known one another, but they had at least one thing in common: cancer.

As the manager of Women's Health Boutique and a licensed cosmetologist, I invited Christen Price, a representative from the American Cancer Society to come share the "Look Good, Feel Better" program with women who could use a little encouragement. Each woman had an opportunity to share about her journey with cancer. Each one talked about herself but seemed more interested in encouraging the others.

The three women who attended, Deanna, Tina and Lori, had been invited to the 12-step makeover and to get tips on combating health problems that resulted from cancer treatments. The LGFB class included information dedicated to skin, nail and hair care.

Deanna was chosen as the model for the makeover and she discussed her extremely dry skin as an unpleasant side effect of treatment. Chemotherapy also made her lose most of her eyebrows. She wondered if there was anything that she could do to look more natural so I made suggestions on how to remedy the problems and offered advice on using the items included in the free make-up and skin care kit donated to each participant by the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association (CTFA), a program sponsor. Christen shared the importance of keeping contaminants out of cosmetic containers by using cotton swabs instead of fingers to extract make-up. It is common to introduce bacteria into make-up when using the hands to apply. Infection could result and slow down important treatments. She also reminded the women never to wear acrylic nails while undergoing treatments, as they are a breeding ground for bacteria.



*LGFB participants, cancer survivors Tina Weaver, Lori Nelson, and Deanna Otwell (seated), with Joann McDonald, manager and cosmetologist of WHB at Trinity Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama.*

Lori, another woman in the group, slowly took off her pink sequined bandanna to reveal that her head had not escaped the effects of chemotherapy. A friend had given her several scarves to cover her baldness, but she wasn't sure how to wear them. I showed Lori and the group how to use a simple scarf to create a number of flattering styles that seemed to make all the difference in boosting their self-confidence. Lori was thrilled to learn that she had options. "This was the best part for me," she said.

The women, from very different walks of life, found they shared more than cancer in common. In just two hours they had developed a warm rapport. Laughter, hugs and even a few tears made the morning special for everyone and they left having exchanged advice, e-mail addresses and even a few hugs.

The Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association, the National Cosmetology Association and the American Cancer Society offer this program free of charge in most areas in the United States. To find out more about Look Good...Feel Better programs in your area contact the ACS or 1-800-395-LOOK.

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the hospital. And her recovery hasn't ended there. Following her discharge, she was assigned a regimen of physical, occupational and speech therapies. Martha had her work cut out for her. She soon became mobile, first with the use of a wheelchair, then a walker and later, a cane.

Martha says she learned more about stroke while working with a neuropsychologist after being discharged from the hospital than she had learned in her 33 years as an RN. "I have a 30 percent chance of recurrence," she said. "And I learned that the location of the stroke in my brain gave me a better outcome than if it

would have occurred elsewhere." However, the residual effects are weakness in her right side, balance problems, speech difficulties, and she tires easily.

But even so, just six months since the stroke she can be seen walking her dog through the neighborhood and has only a hint of difficulty with her speech. "I am working toward being released to go back to work," said Martha. "I can't go back to the OR yet—it's too physically demanding." She says she is a lot more conscious of diet and daily exercise. "That is the key to all of it," she said. "But I am blessed; I'm a poster child for recovery."

## Who Needs Compression Garments?

People who have vascular impairments such as wounds, clots, infections, edema and lymphedema are candidates for compression garments. Here are the facts:

- 1.5 million people who suffer from chronic wounds have diabetic ulcers.
- 2.5 million people have pressure ulcers.
- 1 million people have venous stasis (circulatory) ulcers.
- 15% of all diabetics will develop chronic wounds.
- Patients with diabetes have a 15-fold increase in the risk of amputation and approximately 60,000 diabetics will undergo amputation each year.
- One-half of all diabetics have or will develop neuropathy (numbness or other abnormal sensations), which can lead to injuries, sores, chronic infections, gangrene or amputations.
- Pressure ulcers occur in 3% to 14% of hospitalized patients and up to 25% of nursing home residents.
- Approximately 140,000 patients are hospitalized every year with wounds, with an average hospital stay of 20 to 30 days.
- 6 out of every 10 American adults are overweight (Body Mass Index 25-29).

- 30% of Americans are obese (Body Mass Index over 30).
- Of those who are obese, 11 million are considered “morbidly obese.”
- 2 million are considered “super morbidly obese” (more than 200 lbs overweight).
- Obesity is linked to other diseases such as Alzheimer’s, dementia, diminished ambulation, diabetes and osteoarthritis.

Source: <http://starboardhealth.com/page2.html>

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